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IN DIVERS TONES.

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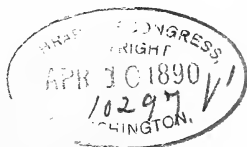
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IN DIVERS TONES

BY

✓
Herbert Wolcott Bowen



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IN DIVERS TONES.

A SYLVAN SCENE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ : UNKNOWN.

A young lady climbs over a rail-fence, and on reaching the ground is accosted by a young man who has been watching her from behind a tree.

HE.

Good morning, fair maid ! —

Nay : be not afraid !

Before have we met.

Why then be so rude

As to hasten away ?

Thy name I forget,

But here in the wood,

Last summer, one day,

Exchanged we a greeting.

Dost remember the meeting ?

SHE.

Suppose I say *yes*?

HE.

Thou canst not say less ;
So add, pray, *with pleasure*.

SHE.

One's words one should measure.

HE.

In court, not in courting, —
Forgive my retorting.

SHE.

I beg thee desist.

HE.

I cannot resist.

SHE.

What? being so witty?

HE.

No; one that's so pretty.

SHE.

Thou darest to flatter?

HE.

I dare, — but no matter.

SHE.

Go on ! I command thee.

HE.

No, no ; I'll withstand thee.

SHE.

I thought thou didst say,
" 'T is hard to resist " ?

HE.

I thought thou didst pray,
" I beg thee desist."

SHE.

Suppose I say *yes* ?

HE.

Thou canst not say less ;
So add, *with regret*.

SHE.

To add makes me fret.

HE.

I'd soothe thee, and quiet.

SHE.

Suppose I should try it,
Pray, how wouldst thou soothe ?

HE.

Thy brow I would smooth
In this gentle way.

(Smooths her brow.)

SHE.

And show me now, pray,
How "quiet" thou 'dst make me.

HE.

(Draws her to his breast.)

In my arms thus I 'd take thee,
And thy speech I 'd confine,
With my lips pressed to thine.

(Kisses her.)

SHE.

For shame ! let me go !

HE.

Suppose I say *no* —
Would it cause you distress ?

SHE.

Thou canst not say less :
So add —

HE.

I adore thee !

SHE.

Repeat, I implore thee !

HE.

(Releases her.)

But hush !

SHE.

(Excitedly.)

Some one's calling.

HE.

Intrusion most galling !

But I'll pass for thy brother.

SHE.

Thou canst not ; 't is mother.

HE.

Then I'll pass from thy sight,

(Tenderly.)

From day unto night.

SHE.

Farewell ! do not kiss me.

(Submits.)

HE.

I'll fly. Wilt thou miss me ?

SHE.

O go ! I entreat !

HE.

I'll fly, I repeat.

(Does not move.)

SHE.

There she is !

HE.

Has she seen us ?

SHE.

There's a tree now between us.

Besides, she's near-sighted.

HE.

She is ? I'm delighted.

SHE.

O look ! there's another !

HE.

Who is it ?

SHE.

(Alarmed.)

My brother.

HE.

By Jove !

SHE.

(Still more alarmed.)

And old Fido

He has at his side, oh !

HE.

If I wait I shall see

Thy whole family tree.

SHE.

O go !

HE.

Well, good-by !

(Kisses her and turns away.)

SHE.

Don't forget me !

HE.

Not I.

SHE.

(Dejectedly, to herself.)

Thus joy ends in sorrow.

HE.

(Turning round.)

Let's meet here —

SHE.

(Enthusiastically.)

To-morrow !

(They kiss their hands to each other.)

WHEN BOOKS WERE FEW.

ROUNDEL.

WHEN books were few, life must have been
Embittered more with pain and rue.
Time must have had an awful mien
When books were few.

And yet the sky was just as blue,
The fields were just as fair and green,
And hearts were just as fond and true.

Who knows but man was more serene,
And quicker, deeper comfort drew
From every living source and scene,
When books were few.

A RECONCILIATION.

HE found her in her room,
Half hidden in the gloom,
 And humming
A plaintive little air
That tells of love's despair
 The coming.

She brushed her tears aside,
And from the past she tried
 To borrow
A smile to make him feel
At ease, and to conceal
 Her sorrow.

But, for his cruel course,
The air to deep remorse
 Had moved him : —

He oft had sung it, too,
Before he ever knew
 She loved him.

He raised his eyes above,
Of his undying love
 In token ;
When with a sob he knelt
Beside her, and he felt
 Heart-broken.

She clasped him to her breast,
Which he had so distress
 And wounded,
And said, in him once more
Her faith was, as before,
 “Unbounded.”

He ne'er forgot the word,
And ne'er again he heard
 Her humming
The plaintive little air
That tells of love's despair
 The coming.

LINES ON A BEAUTIFUL LADY.

TO A BEAUTIFUL GIRL.

SHE, too, had beauty plenty
When she was one-and-twenty ;
And no one ever started
In life more sunny-hearted
Than she.

Her lovers, too, were many ;
And of them all not any
There was but would have given
His hope of going to heaven,
Her slave on earth to be.

She still had beauty plenty
When she was five-and-twenty,
And 'rose where she 'd been kneeling,
While all the bells were pealing,
A bride.

Ah, yes ! she looked so queenly,
One could not gaze serenely
Upon her, though one never,
Perchance, had dreamed he ever
Might stand there at her side.

She still has beauty plenty,
Though now twice five-and-twenty ;
But deeper 't is and rarer ;
For 't is her soul that fairer
Has grown.

Ay, wounded oft and gravely,
She's fought her battles bravely,
And sacrificed to duty
Her superficial beauty,
As you too would your own.

IN CAPTIVITY.

I OFTEN, on a sunny day,
 Look far away
Beyond my work, and looking, dream
 That by a stream,
Or over meadows fresh and fair,
 Without a care
I wander ; and the while I give
My heart and soul to all I see ;
And then it is I truly live.
But startled recollection brings
Me back to sad reality —
Of life and fate I then complain ;
 But all in vain :
I'm like a captive bird that sings
 Of joyous things,
Then beats his cage with wretched wings.

INDEFINABLE.

ALL efforts to define it

In words were incomplete :

'Tis something grand and thrilling ;

'Tis something subtly sweet.

In certain strains of music

Its haunting voice I hear ;

In poems oft, and paintings,

It leaves a smile or tear.

Then too I see it, feel it,

In nature, here and there ;

And in my heart it lingers,

Like perfume in the air.

But even in the moment

I think it is my own,

To guard and keep forever, —

Like perfume it is gone.

And then my heart feels empty,
And, musing, I repeat,
'T is something grand and thrilling,
'T is something subtly sweet.

THE WORKS OF MAN AND OF NATURE.

SONNET.

THE works of man are always incomplete
However much he has of sacred fire,
And always leave us something to desire.
His own ill-judgment, faults, and failings cheat
His care, and in his every work repeat
Themselves : so all in vain doth he aspire
To keep for brush or chisel, pen or lyre,
His inspiration heavenly pure and sweet.

But in the works of Nature we behold
Design and execution truly one :
The sky, the clouds, the mountains, grove and
wold,
The snow-flakes, dew-drops, beams of moon and
sun,
The rose, the lily, and anemone,
Are all what she intended them to be.

THE ORDER OF THINGS IS CHANGING.

THE order of things is changing ;
A glorious day is breaking ;
From darkness and superstition
Mankind, exultant, is waking.

The faith that has tortured reason,
Soon reason itself will banish ;
The cry for justice will triumph,
And resignation will vanish.

To the Present, not to the future,
Our souls we shall soon be giving ;
Our dread of our own damnation
Will change to love for the living.

The order of things is changing ;
A glorious day is breaking ;
From darkness and superstition
Mankind, exultant, is waking.

FAIR MONTH OF MAY.

FAIR month of May, fair month of May !
What mortal maid would dare to say
Her charms compare with thine? Behold,
At thy return the buds unfold,
And myriad flowers smile on thee,
And brooklets sparkle merrily,
And birds to every wild and wood,
To every place of solitude,
Proclaim that thou art come again,
And all mankind take up the strain,
Until the earth and sky above,
United 'neath thy sunny sway,
Are filled with praise of thee and love,
Fair month of May, fair month of May !

UNHEARD.

THE bird
That sings its song,
Unheard,
All summer long,
I' the solitude
Of some deep wood,
Sings not the less
For happiness.

LIFE-SONG.

MERRY are the melodies
Issuing from the leafy trees.
Perfumes sweet are hovering over
Brooklet banks and fields of clover.
Valleys pied with myriad flowers
Charm away the sunny hours.
What a lovely world is this !
And the dead — how much they miss !

LIFE.

THOUGH fleet
Is this our life,
And full of strife,
'T is sweet.
So very sweet, forsooth,
That, given health and youth,
I fain on earth would stay
Forever and a day.

TO LORRAINE, WITH A ROSE.

TURNED my thoughts were by this rose
To thy pure and gentle breast.
Nature's sweetest charms are those
That still sweeter thoughts suggest.

TO A THRUSH.

WHAT wondrous power is thine, O thrush !
The very roses seem to blush
A deeper red when thou dost sing ;
The amorous vines more fondly cling
To trunk and bough ; and still more lush
The grasses by the brooklet grow.
Could I pour out my joy and woe
As thou dost, I perchance might wring
My lady's heart with wretchedness
That she has caused me such distress,
And then persuade her to bestow
On me her favor — but, ah me !
Too well I know it cannot be.
I'm doomed, alas ! to loneliness,
To torturing dreams and jealousy.

WHEN FIRST I LOOKED ON THEE.

THE beauty of thy face,
Thy perfect form and grace,
When first I looked on thee,

Did move

The very soul of me,
And I cried inaudibly,

“ My love ! ”

A MESSAGE.

GENTLE zephyr, if to me
Thou wouldst kind and courteous be,
Do not to my lady bear
Ev'n a hint that I despair;
For I fain her heart would move,
Not through pity, but through love.
Whisper to her only this,
That I send by thee a kiss.

FLOWER SONG.

I LOVE the fragrance and the hue
Of blossoms on the apple trees.
I love sweet violets wet with dew,
And daisies and anemones.
I love the flower unknown to bees,
Th' adventurous Alpine traveller seeks.
But more — much more than all of these —
I love the roses of thy cheeks.

I YEARN FOR THEE.

I YEARN for thee,
Burn for thee,
Sigh for thee,
Die for thee,
 Dearest,
 Despairing,
 Not caring
 To live.
 Yet give
But a sign
 Thou 'lt be mine,
And I 'll hie to thee,
 Fly to thee,
 Dearest,
Rejoiced that I yearned for thee,
 Burned for thee,
 Sighed for thee,
 Dearest,

And all but died for thee,
Dearest.
So call to me,
Call to me,
Dearest.
Be all to me !

LORRAINE.

LORRAINE has golden hair
That falls below her knee
In waves of witchery ;
A forehead low and fair ;
And ears like dainty shells ;
And then a dreamy eye,
Gray as the autumn sky,
Which hints but never tells
Of what goes on within ;
A nose with nostrils fine ;
A dimpled cheek and chin ;
And oh ! a mouth divine.
Her hands and feet are small,
She 's graceful, lithe, and tall,
And always at her ease ;
 And, best of all,
 She loves to please.
To know her, is to know the worth
Of all that 's sweet and fair on earth.

BOWER-SONG.

THE moments that I pass with thee
In these secluded bowers,
Where Nature loves to exercise
Her subtlest spells and powers,
Are sweet to me as to the bee
Are dewy summer flowers,
And from them honey I derive
For lonely, wintry hours.

So go not yet ! The sun is still
The happy world surveying ;
And on the graceful leafy twigs
The merry birds are swaying ;
And in the neighboring fields and glades
The silent herds are straying :
Besides, dear love, there always is
Such pleasure in delaying.

THINE EYES.

THINE eyes are like the night—

At times so dark and cold

That in the deepest gloom

My spirit they infold.

And then, at times, so bright,

That, soaring up above,

My spirit reaches Heaven

In ecstasy of love.

WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

Belovèd mine, when sad and drear

The scenes appear

Of life without, to still my sighs

I close my eyes,

And look within : then all is fair ;

For thou art there.

DOST THOU KNOW ?

Dost thou know thine eyes are bright
With a peace-disturbing light ?
Dost thou know thy smile makes sweet
Ev'n the dust beneath thy feet ?
Dost thou know thy touch doth reach
Depths that ne'er were moved by speech ?
Dost thou know thy love is worth
More to me than Heaven or earth ?

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

RONDEAU.

Is life worth living? Who, I pray,
Your joys and ills but you can weigh?
To me your question but implies
A horrid doubt, in thin disguise,
Which still persists on hearing "Nay,"

Which shakes its head on hearing "Yea,"
And, ghost-like, haunts you night and day.
Your very soul it is that cries,
"Is life worth living?"

Whom else it haunts, 't is hard to say :
Among you are the young and gray,
The rich and poor, the weak and wise —
All kinds your number doth comprise
Save lovers : they ask not — not they ! —
"Is life worth living?"

TO LORRAINE IN SORROW.

SORROW, till it came to thee,
Only cruel seemed to me.
Softened by thy smiles and tears,
Beautiful it now appears ;
And it makes me love thee more
Than I ever loved before.

IN ANSWER TO A FROWN.

GIVE with your love that boundless faith
That I with mine give you,
And never any jealous wraith
Will haunt us nor undo.
No better safeguard honor knows
Than that which boundless faith bestows.

Still, if the power beyond you lies
Such boundless faith to give,
My self-respect too much I prize
A double life to live.
I could not to myself be true,
Were I a moment false to you.

GROVE SONG.

THE moon is beaming
On lake and grove,
And I am dreaming
Of thee, my love ;
And how utterly lonely
I feel to-night
The whip-poor-will only
Interprets aright.

Yet as great a gladness
Were mine, I trow,
As now is my sadness,
Did I but know,
While the moon is beaming
On lake and grove,
In turn thou art dreaming
Of me, my love.

A CONFESSION.

ROUNDEL.

I 'VE loved but thee, who art — but stay !
If told the startling truth must be,
I 'll speak : forget the words, I pray,
“ I 've loved but thee.”

'T was not on Herrick, but on me
That Julia cast for many a day
Her wondrous spell of witcherie ;

And I it was who, wakeful, lay,
And sighed that I should never see
Rose Aylmer : so I cannot say,
I 've loved but thee.

DREAMING AND WAKING.

WE close our eyes ; we dream ;
Our life's conditions change ;
And everything seems true,
And nothing strange.

Just now I dreamed that we
Were sailing on a lake,
And that I fell asleep,
And could not wake.

You took my heavy head,
And held it on your breast ;
And on my lips and eyes
Your lips you pressed.

But at their touch you breathed
A loving sigh and deep ;
Your head sank close to mine ;
You shared my sleep.

One being did we seem ;
One memory, too, we had,
Which brought back all our pasts,
The good and bad.

Much never understood,
We understood at last ;
And much we feared to tell
Back in the past.

We understood, and smiled
The smile of perfect love ;
And fair the whole earth grew,
As heaven above.

All thought of busy life
Passed from our future's scope ;
No smallest want we felt,
No need of hope.

Meanwhile our steady skiff
Had risen from the lake,
And now by many a star
Its course did take.

As single sunny days
Whole æons passed away ;
And on, still on, our skiff
Sped like a ray.

At last, as from afar,
Sweet music did we hear,
Which thrilled us with delight
As we drew near.

Then came a flood of light,
A sense of heavenly bliss,
And then my lips returned
Your burning kiss.

Ah, God ! 't was sweet to dream
We shared the life divine ;
Yet sweeter 't was to wake,
Belovèd mine ;

For I would rather feel
Your kisses, hear your sighs,
Than have eternal peace
In paradise.

FIRESIDE ILLUSIONS.

SONNET.

THE summer's gone, and yet the languid air
Still thrills me with its fragrance, and I hear,
Among the sensuous, pleachèd pines, the clear
Exultant songs of birds that upward bear
My spirit far from every earthly care,
And free it from forebodings dark and drear ;
And now I feel that thou art drawing near :
'T is thou, indeed, and oh, my God ! how fair !

Thine eyes are full of love, of love untold ;
And 'gainst thy leaping heart thy hands are
pressed ;
I cry thy name, then rush to thee, and fold
Thee blushing, burning, trembling, to my breast ;
I feel thy kisses, hear thy sighs, — ah me !
I do not need to sleep to dream of thee.

NIGHT SONG.

WE have said good-night and parted,
 (The stars are shining above,)
And homeward I turn heavy-hearted,
 (There 's always sorrow in love.)

The whip-poor-will sings in the wood,
 (The stars are shining above,)
As if he, too, understood,
 (There 's always sorrow in love.)

IN DARKNESS.

WHAT wind ! what rain ! what gloom !

No tomb

Is in such sorry plight

For light,

As is my little room

To-night.

Ah, why art thou not here,

My dear ?

Thy touch, thy voice, thy sight

Would quite

Dispel the darkness drear

To-night.

WITHOUT THEE.

My fancy often heeds
My heart's desire, and leads
 Thee over
The thousand leagues of sea
That part thee now from me,
 Thy lover.

I press my lips to thine ;
My arms I fondly twine
 About thee ;
And I remember not
The while how sad's my lot
 Without thee.

AT SUNSET.

ON yonder hills above the shadowy plain,
Still rests the rosy, loving light of day ;
One moment I forget, and smile again,
Then memory comes and steals my peace away.

THE PURSUIT.

HOPE stood on the hill-top,
And I in the vale,
She charming and rosy,
I eager and pale.
She beckoned me to her,
And to her I sped,
But, ere I could reach her,
Far from me she fled.
Her signs she repeated ;
Again I pursued,
But still she retreated,
My arms to elude.
Retreating
And cheating,
Again and again,
She beckoned me to her,
And made me pursue her ;
But ever in vain.

And yet a deceiver
I did not believe her,
 Until at last
 From my sight she passed,
And I found me alone
In a land unknown.

REST.

THE heavens were clouded,
And damp was the air ;
My heart it seemed breaking
With leaden despair ;
When suddenly near me
Sweet Memory came,
And greeted me gently,
And called me by name.
She sat down beside me,
And promised to be
A friend and companion
Forever to me.
I listened,
While glistened
The tears in my eyes,
And when she had ended,
I said, " Thus befriended,
My life I shall prize."

And no one but she
Has been dear to me,
Since I found me alone
In this land unknown.

DUM VIVIMUS VIVAMUS.

LIKE everything else,

We are made of the dust,
And come into life

Because we must ;

And round and round with the seasons we go,
Now smiling with pleasure, now weeping with woe.

We must take what comes,

Be it good or ill ;
And watch what goes

With impotent will ;

So let 's prove we are wise, through our life's short
years,

By enjoying our pleasures and drying our tears.

PURSUE THY WAY.

RONDEAU.

PURSUE thy way ! where'er it lead —
Through many a sweet, melodious mead,
Where idle friends contented lie,
Or over mountains steep and high,
Where none are near, wouldst thou succeed.

And neither stay with friends that plead,
Nor stop to bind thy feet that bleed ;
But onward ! with unfaltering eye
Pursue thy way !

However great may be thy need
Of strength, enough to do thy deed
Will come to thee, if " Do or die " —
But be thy soul's persistent cry.
So, onward ! slacken not thy speed !
Pursue thy way !

MISINTERPRETATIONS.

OUR tears we many a time have shed,
And looked to the Future with infinite dread,
But only at last with a smile to perceive
That cause we had none to fear or to grieve.

And many a time, by illusions beguiled,
We have thought we were favored by Fate and
 have smiled,
When, had we but known what since we have
 learned,
The hottest of tears our cheeks would have
 burned.

BEAUTY AND LOVE.

WHEN beauty attracts and speech allures,
And virtue captivates, love endures ;
But beauty alone has ephemeral charms,
And love dissolves in her very arms.

ART HAS NO BOUNDARIES.

WHATEVER in art is truly great
Is based on a truth that has no date,
But always was, and ever will be,
And ignores the limits of land and of sea.

LOVE'S BEGINNING AND END.

THERE is nothing in all the realm of bliss
So ineffably sweet as love's first kiss ;
And nothing there is in sorrow's sphere
So utterly sad as love's last tear.

A COMFORTING THOUGHT.

SOME reason to be glad
We all have, ev'n the sad ;
For they have this, at least :
To live they'll soon have ceas'd.

“OUR RELIGION.”

THE gospel taught by Christ has never been

Accepted yet by any race or state :

On every page of history is seen

That “our religion” is not love, but hate.

A COMPARISON.

THE Future tells us nothing : hidden lies
Its purpose from the sharpest mortal eyes.
The Present tells us little : dazzled, we
Undue proportions give to all we see.
The Past tells much : to those with sense supplied
It is a present help, a future guide.

ANSWER TO A NOTE OF THANKS.

AGAIN, fair lady, you will have to try
The sender of the roses to discover ;
Now that you're certain that it was not I,
You'd better thank *your next most modest lover.*

TO MY PIOUS FRIENDS.

I WOULD not blame you, much less abuse,
And yet at times I cannot but laugh,
When I see how readily you confuse
The Lamb of God with the Golden Calf.

LOIS.

SONNET.

ADOWN the silvery stream Maurice is rowing,
And fair-haired Lois in the stern is minding
The wayward rudder through the sunshine blind-
ing,
Which ne'ertheless prevents her not from throwing
Swift, furtive glances on his features glowing
With keen exhilaration, nor from finding
A nook beside the mossy bank and winding,
Where they may rest, and catch the breeze that's
blowing.

There, as a bud, with secret sweetness laden,
Unfolds its petals to the summer morning,
Fair Lois blossomed forth into a maiden,
And of the change a burning blush gave warn-
ing,
Which any one, except her timid lover,
Had not been sorely puzzled to discover.

EPITAPH.

ERECTED is this stone
In memory of one
Who never once was heard
To speak a truthful word.
Nor has he changed. So hush!
Pass on ! and for him blush
Up to your very eyes !
For even here, *he lies.*

WHAT FOLLOWED ?

A DAINTY little hand has she,
With tapering, rosy tips,
And when last night she smiled on me
I pressed it to my lips.

“ What followed ? ” Prithee, question not !
And yet this hint I ’ll give, —
’T is not a disagreeable lot
From *hand* to *mouth* to live.

FAITHFUL.

TRIOLET.

SHE loved and lost long years ago,
But faithful still remains and true.
Gay youths and maidens whisper low,
"She loved and lost long years ago ;"
And love seems holier since they know,
That till she dies they'll whisper too :
"She loved and lost long years ago,
But faithful still remains and true."

HOW SHE WON HIM.

RONDEL.

SHE stood on the tips of her toes,
And slyly peered over the wall
At his martial figure and tall,
The cause of her secret woes ;
Yet little did he suppose,
The gallant, impetuous Paul,
She stood on the tips of her toes,
And slyly peered over the wall,
Until at his feet a rose
Her trembling fingers let fall,
And then he discovered all.
To win him the whole world knows,
She stood on the tips of her toes.

IN MEMORIAM
ULYSSES S. GRANT.

I.

COURAGEOUS, strong, pure-minded, calm, and just
Was he in whom we placed our hope and trust,

II.

When dissolution, hotly, madly planned,
Was fiercely threatening our beloved land.

III.

Great was the trust : he proved it well deserved.
Sublime the deed : the Union he preserved.

IV.

Then was he folded to the Country's heart,
And chosen to take the highest civic part.

V.

His motto "Peace," he brought, from sea to sea,
The sundered sections into sympathy.

VI.

Such was his life-work : grander has been none.
He lives with Lincoln and with Washington.

AMERICANS !

AMERICANS, stand by your past !
Remember your forefathers cast
Their fortunes and lives in the scale
That liberty here might prevail,
And that this your country might be
Forever the land of the free !

Remember, when freedom was gained,
What self-control they maintained,
And what efforts they made to give
A government that should live,
And evermore worthy be
Of a people proud and free !

And remember, now they are dust,
That on you devolves a trust
The grandest, noblest, and best
That ever a people possess !
To all your traditions hold fast !
Americans, stand by your past !

NATIONAL HYMN.

BLESS the United States,
Ruler of nations' fates,
Great God above !
Grant that forever free,
True to our trust and Thee,
We may united be
Closely in love ?

Bless us in all the arts,
Bless us with crowded marts,
Our hopes increase !
Bless us with lasting light,
Bless us with love of right,
Bless us with matchless might,
Bless us with peace !

A NARROW VIEW.

ROUNDEL.

A NARROW view, my clever friend,
Is what the world's accustomed to.
Men love, because they comprehend,
A narrow view.

With genius such as yours is, you
Will quickly rise if you commend
Accepted truths, objurgate new,

And if your stanch support you lend
To some stiff creed, or party hue ;
For sects and parties all defend
A narrow view.

A REBUKE—UNSPOKEN.

“How could she?” you a red-lipped woman ask!
Ah, God! that I might tear away your mask
Of base hypocrisy, and from your soul
Learn all the lapses of your self-control,
Read all your secret thoughts, your longings sweet,
And note the times when if but at your feet
A lover knelt, you too had smoothed his brow,
Drank in his words, believed his every vow,
Had strained him wildly to your breast,
Had given your burning lips and all the rest,
Had sighed because you had no more to give,
And been as glad to die for him as live.
Yes; chance, the lack of chance, has saved your
soul,
And not your virtue or your self-control.

SAPPHO.

LONG the night was ; crushed is her heart and
bleeding ;

Still she watches, on her divan reclining ;
Pale her cheek is, pale after hours of pleading,
Passion, and pining.

“ Worse,” she cries, “ than torture such woe as
this is.”

Then she calls again and again her lover ;
Till her brow the pitying Dream-god kisses,
Hovering above her.

On her closed eyelids dark circles languish ;
Clasped her hands are over her golden tresses ;
Quivering still her lips are, and still her anguish
Scarce any less is.

Why the change that suddenly now comes o'er
her ?

Doth she feel the breeze with aromas laden ?

Blow a while, sweet breeze, and to joy restore her,
Desolate maiden.

Nay ; a sunbeam over her bosom falling
Thrills it through and through with illusions
beguiling :
Round her love she twines her soft arms inthrall-
ing,
Blissfully smiling.

TO GERALDINE.

WORDS that to the ear
Are not clear,
Being far too fleet
And too sweet,
Make our hearts, which hear,
Wildly beat.

Much my heart was stirred
When I heard,
In this valley green
And serene,
But just now, the word,
"Geraldine."

THE REVERIE OF A SPINSTER.

ROUNDEL.

I OFTEN sigh as I reflect
How love has always passed me by.
"Some curse is mine, some gross defect,"
I often sigh.

No arms I have to which to fly ;
No look my longings to detect ;
No home to cheer ; to hush, no cry.

'T is hard to keep my self-respect ;
'T is hard my nature to defy.
"A life that has no love is wreck'd,"
I often sigh.

THOUGHTS ON SEEING A BELLE.

CAN feet so fairy light
Have earthly mission ?
Can breast so snowy white
Burn with ambition ?

Can eyes so soft as thine
With envy glisten ?
Can ears so pink and fine
To scandal listen ?

ILLS, PRESENT AND PAST.

THE ills of the present were easier to bear,
If we but remembered the ills of the past,
The most of which only made life less fair
For the moment, too unsubstantial to last ;
While the rest that remained soon ceased to smart,
And live now as memories which we treasure
In some remote corner or nook of the heart,
And from which we derive a certain sad pleasure.

IN THE CAMPO SANTO.

“BEHOLD yon gloomy monk,
With cowl drawn o’er his head :
He looks like one that holds
Communion with the dead.”

“Yes ; did you hear him breathe
A gentle name, and sigh ?
And did you see the tear
That glistened in his eye.”

LITTLE PHIL.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS.

A MILE from home is pleasure-loving Phil,
And indistinct the objects round him grow :
The heavens which he thought would be aglow
With clouds are darkened, and the air is chill.
He hears the crickets chirp, the tree-toads trill.
Upon the woody highway shadows throw
Their silent terrors. Tales of long ago
Flash through his wretched mind, impair his will,
And lend uncanny fancies to his ears.
He sees a shape before him, and behind
A stealthy, quick-approaching step he hears.
He stops. His heart beats fast. Then like the
wind
He rushes on, until the friendly light
Of home he sees. Then laughs he at his fright.

TO MADELEINE.

I FANCIED I could live for art ;
And so I closed, without regret,
The open portals of my heart,
And kept them closed, until I met
My love, my queen,
My Madeleine.

I fancied fame the sweetest prize ;
And so for fame I chose to live :
But had I fame that reached the skies,
It all for thee I'd gladly give,
My love, my queen,
My Madeleine.

AFTER MEETING A POET.

TRIOLET.

HE 's written many a lovely line,
And yet he 's hardly known to fame.
(O Fate, a mocking smile is thine !)
He 's written many a lovely line,
And yet he 's hardly known to fame.
What hope is there for verse of mine
When his is slighted (more 's the shame !)
He 's written many a lovely line,
And yet he 's hardly known to fame.

A READY CONCESSION.

“You should not say my love’s grown less :
It really is not true.

You only said so — come, confess !
Because you’re feeling blue.”

“Well, *greater*, then, — about a word
Why make so much ado ?

Your love’s grown greater, for I’ve heard
You love my rival too.”

SHE WAS WONDROUS FAIR.

SHE was wondrous fair, and I gloried much
In the thrilling power of her glance and touch
And the luring charm of her laughter ;
But I did not see that her lips were too red,
That her love was not life, but death instead,
Till I came to myself long after.

Although I hate her, and curse her well,
Yet even now I'm not free from her spell
And never shall be hereafter ;
For over my memory her power is such
That I oft feel the thrill of her glance and touch
And the luring charm of her laughter.

HAPPINESS.

ALL other happiness in life is small

Compared with that we feel when some great
fear,

Or gruesome dread, that long has held us thrall,

Doth of a sudden wholly disappear.

PREJUDICES.

PREJUDICES, put to flight
Like the darkness of the night,
Leave things in their proper light.
Use thy reason, then, and be
From all prejudices free.

A CRITICISM.

My lover is a poet : when he speaks
I feel the color surge into my cheeks,
So manly are his words, so sweet, so plain.
But when he writes me poems, all in vain
I try to think he found them in his heart :
The meaning is too veiled, too deft his art ;
They lack the ring of the impulsive lays
Of those that sang in less esthetic days :
They do not bring the color to my cheeks, —
My lover is a poet, *when he speaks !*

EPITAPH.

THE friends of him that lies beneath this sod
Are not his loss deploring :
Their sleep is calm and peaceful now, thank God !
For he has quit his snoring.

SURVIVAL OF THE LESS FIT.

OUR honeymoon was hardly over
Before I was of joy bereft,
Because I found I'd lost my lover,
And only had a husband left.

WAIT A WHILE.

Joy, what art thou? tell me,
Though I know thee well.
“Wait a while,” said Sorrow,
“Wait, and I will tell.”

Life, what art thou? tell me,
Though I draw thy breath.
“Wait, and I will answer;
Wait a while,” said Death.

ALONE.

AMONG the leaves I heard
A bird
Sing o'er and o'er again
A strain
That seemed a weary word
Of pain,

Which I, all joy denied,
Supplied,
And sadder there is none :
This one,
Which often I have sighed :
" Alone."

LOVE ONCE GONE IS GONE FOREVER.

FACES please us, voices charm us,
And our reason tries to prove,
That, although traduced or broken,
Still our hearts are free to love.

But our hearts, forgetting nothing,
No such sophistry can stir :
Love once gone is gone forever ;
Passions only oft recur.

THE PURPOSE OF PAIN.

BUT little of the laws we know
That govern joy and pain,
Save that the former loves to go,
The latter to remain.

Yet, whether sad or happy, this
We all alike must see,
If life were sweeter than it is,
More bitter death would be.

ALAS! POOR TREE.

RONDEAU.

ALAS, poor tree ! beneath your shade
Long years ago, a child, I played,
And on your limbs, stair after stair,
I clambered high into the air,
And from the top the world surveyed,

And wondered how 't was ever made,
And in such lovely dress arrayed ;
But now of branches you are bare.
Alas, poor tree !

You, too, it seems, have but obeyed
The law that makes the features fade
Of every one, however fair,
And turns to white the blackest hair ;
And low you too will soon be laid.
Alas, poor tree !

REMEMBER ME.

ROUNDEL.

REMEMBER me, as one who gave
His earliest, sweetest love to thee —
As one, the while, half god half slave, —
Remember me.

In years to come, if times there be
When tender memory's reflux wave
Restores thee, heart and fancy free,

To maidenhood, a smile I crave,
As loving as I used to see,
Or tear if I be in my grave.
Remember me !

CONTRASTS.

In every voice we hear a cry
For something unattained ;
Or else a deep, despairing sigh
For something unregained.

In every face we see the light
Of days not yet arrived,
Or else the record of a night
That peace has not survived.

In every touch we feel the love
Of animating breath ;
Or else some intimation of
A lessening dread of death.

COMPENSATION.

TO G. H.

I too wept bitter tears
In bygone years ;
But, growing old, forgot
How sad had been my lot.
And so these days to thee
Will seem ere long to be,
Not what they are,
But beautiful and fair.

Yet why 't is so,
I do not know ;
Unless, perchance,
As we in age advance
And hopes prove vain,
Fate, out of pity, chooses
That what the future loses
The past shall gain.

THEN AND NOW.

A YOUTH, I loved the hills and dells,
The woods and singing streams,
And moonlight sails upon the lake,
And lost myself in dreams.

A man, I love my books and pipe,
The glow the embers cast,
And if, by chance, I ever dream,
'Tis only of the past.

A CHANCE MEETING.

ROUNDEL.

WHEN I met her just now in the street,
I felt that my cheek grew red,
And I passed without turning my head,
Or removing my eyes from my feet.
She looked just as pretty and sweet
As she did in the days that have fled.
When I met her just now in the street,
I felt that my cheek grew red.
Though I fancied we some day should meet,
Ere the years of our youth had all sped,
Still I thought the old feelings were dead ;
But I know that she heard my heart beat,
When I met her just now in the street.

EVERY HEART'S A SHRINE.

IN busy haunts I pass my days,
My evenings by the fire ;
I'm weaned from all my youthful ways ;
I burn with no desire.

Men call me cold, and doubtless I
Have grown so unaware ;
And, since I do not make reply,
They think I little care.

Some things there are, which are not told,
That others ne'er divine ;
Yet every heart, however cold,
For some name is a shrine.

ILLUSIONS.

WHY smilest thou? Illusions
Are not confined to youth :
Ours even show a wider
Divergence from the truth.

Think only of the ev'nings
That find us now alone,
How we forget completely
Our youth is past and gone,

Recalling old emotions
Until they seem like new,
And rosy hopes, long faded,
Till they regain their hue.

PLEASURES.

SONNET.

WHEN, years ago, I was a little child,
I loved to be out doors the livelong day,
And with companions in the fields to play,
To gather flowers, and wander through the wild.
Then later, when a youth, I was beguiled
To visit lands I'd read of far away.
How sweet my freedom was, and life how gay!
My heart was quick to beat when beauty smiled.

But now that I have passed my golden prime,
And care no more in foreign lands to roam,
Whenever I am blessed with leisure time
I love the restful atmosphere of home,
A wholesome book, a pipe, a clever friend.
Life has its pleasures to its very end.

A COMPARISON.

WHEN I look back upon the past,
I needs must breathe a sigh
Of deep regret, to think how fast
My youth's sweet years flew by.
What strength, what courage, then were mine !
What rosy hopes ! what dreams divine !

But one by one my hopes proved vain,
And all my dreams untrue ;
My strength and courage to retain
Is all I now can do.
Compared with what I hoped to be,
I am but sorry parody.

CONSOLATION.

As little children in their grief
Are often offered this relief :
“ To-morrow, waking from thy sleep,
Thou wilt not grieve, my child, nor weep ;
For trifling then and far away
Will seem the troubles of to-day ; ”

So, often we a whisper hear
That sweetly bids, “ Be of good cheer,
And comfort in the knowledge take
That there 's a sleep from which thou 'lt wake,
To find forever passed away
The troubles of thy life's short day.”

LOST.

Who feels not sometime like a child
That's lost, and wanders in the wild,
And tries to keep a hopeful heart,
Although he feels his strength depart,
And sees around him and before
Uncertainty and nothing more?

LIKE A LEAF.

How often, recalling our love,
Of you do I think and dream,
Now that lonely and aimless I move,
Like a leaf down a sinuous stream.

My heart will be yours till I die,
Though never we meet the while :
I would rather remember, and sigh,
Than forget the past, and smile.

A LONELY WAY.

ROUNDEL.

A LONELY way in life we tread,
And every signboard seems to say,
While pointing out our course ahead :
“ A lonely way.”

Though by companions, blithe and gay
Apparently, our steps are led,
And jollity marks every day,

Still we are conscious that, instead
Of walking closely with us, they,
As we, pursue, when all is said,
A lonely way.

FAR AWAY.

THE hills of Woodstock rise
Close up against the skies,
And often,
While over them I stray,
My eyes look far away
And soften.

They soften with the tears
That tell of ties the years
Would sever ;
Of joys that long have fled,
Of hopes that now are dead
Forever.

TOO LATE.

THOU comest, Fate,
Too late.
No favor now
Canst thou
Bestow on me
That would not be
A mockery,
Save death ; and even that would not
Be different from my present lot.

IN MY WAKEFUL HOURS.

OFTEN, in my wakeful hours,
Fields I see all fill'd with flowers,
Birds and brooks, and woodlands green,
Happy hills, and skies serene.

Times there are, again, when I
See dead leaves go whirling by,
Gaze upon an endless wold,
Gaze, and shiver with the cold.

DEAD.

NEVER more her voice will ring
Through the woodlands in the spring.
Never more her hands will cull
Fragrant flowers and beautiful.
Never more her eyes will shine
Eloquently into mine.
Dead, forever dead, is she,
Dead, but oh ! not dead to me.

MY SWEET LORRAINE, MY FAIR
LORRAINE.

My sweet Lorraine, my fair Lorraine,
When I recall the hours
I passed with thee in wood and lea
Among the birds and flowers,
I hear thy laugh, thy merry laugh,
And on thy lips I press,
My sweet Lorraine, my fair Lorraine,
A lover's long caress.

My sweet Lorraine, my fair Lorraine,
I yearn for thee and weep,
And sacred in my heart of hearts
Thy memory I keep ;
And so shall come when life is done
As happy to thy side,
My sweet Lorraine, my fair Lorraine,
As bridegroom to his bride.

JOHN ELIOT BOWEN.

DIED JANUARY 3, 1890.

HE fought with death, but not with life, in vain,
Of men the noblest, worthiest of love ;
And death, as if *its* love of him to prove,
Gave not to him but us to bear the pain.

VISIONS.

VILLANELLE.

I HAVE only to close my eyes,
Which often with sadness fill,
And before me sweet visions rise.

To see under summer skies
The sheen of valley and hill,
I have only to close my eyes.

My memory backward flies
To the days when my fortune was nil,
And before me sweet visions rise.

Those were days of smiles, not of sighs ;
And to smile even now at will,
I have only to close my eyes.

Yes ; the past, that was happy, supplies
 Me now with pleasures that thrill,
And before me sweet visions rise.

Death, when I think of the ties
 That bind me to hearts that are still,
I have only to close my eyes,
 And before me sweet visions rise.

END.

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